

NEWS RELEASE

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 1997

For additional information: Bill Winter, Director of Communications ♦ (202) 333-0008 Ext. 226

Are there 134,300 other potential Lawrence Singletons on the street?

Brutal Florida slaying makes Libertarians question crime priorities

WASHINGTON, DC — Surprised that a sadistic rapist, released after serving a short sentence, has brutally murdered another innocent victim in Florida?

Don't be, the Libertarian Party said today.

"It's the natural consequence of a criminal justice system that is more concerned with punishing Americans for committing victimless crimes than with protecting us against vicious criminals like Lawrence Singleton who rape, mutilate, and kill," said Steve Dasbach, the chairman of America's third largest political party.

The case Dasbach was referring to has created a firestorm of outrage and inspired headlines across the USA. Lawrence Singleton was arrested yesterday for the bloody slaying of a Florida woman. He had been released from jail after serving just eight years for raping a 15-year-old in California, and then cutting off her forearms.

His latest crime prompted at least one attorney to label Singleton a "walking time bomb."

"Unfortunately, Singleton is just one of 134,000 walking time bombs," Dasbach pointed out. "And this problem will just get worse because the government's War On Drugs is filling the nation's prisons to the bursting point with nonviolent drug users. As a consequence, more violent rapists and murderers like Singleton are being released to prey on innocent Americans."

Dasbach's 134,000 figure comes directly from the Justice Department, which released a report in early February revealing that 134,300 violent sex criminals were released on parole or probation in 1994. During that same year, more than one million Americans were arrested for drug crimes — 70% of them for mere possession.

"In other words, while the police were busy arresting people for smoking marijuana, they were putting 134,300 potential Lawrence Singletons back on the streets in your neighborhood," said Dasbach. "The only question is: Who will be their next victim?"

"This tragedy in Florida shows that it's time for America to reexamine our drug laws. We have to make a choice: Should the police protect us from being hacked to death by butchers like Lawrence Singleton — or spend their time arresting teenagers for smoking marijuana?"

"Unfortunately, politicians have *already* made that decision — and chosen to keep spending billions on the failed War on Drugs. As a result, the blood of more and more innocent victims is on the hands of the politicians, who are too busy strutting and preening as macho Drug Warriors to notice the carnage their policies have caused," he said.

#